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Gender statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2017/228 and past practices. It provides a summary of the recent activities undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics under the umbrella of the Global Gender Statistics Programme. In the report, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics presents an update on the implementation of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project, including on the completion of the draft guidelines for the production of statistics on asset ownership and on entrepreneurship, from a gender perspective, and describes the revision of the minimum set of gender indicators to align it with the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators framework. It also reports on the organization of the eleventh meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. Finally, it describes its activities and those of the Division aimed at strengthening gender data, under the Global Gender Statistics Programme. The Commission is invited to take note of the ongoing work and future priorities on gender statistics.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report introduces the work undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics in 2017 to fulfil the requests of the Statistical Commission contained in its decisions 42/102, 44/109 and 48/109, in terms of: (a) developing methodological guidelines for the production and use of gender statistics, including on the measurement of asset ownership and entrepreneurship under the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project, and providing training and assistance to strengthen the capacity of countries to produce and disseminate gender statistics for policymaking; (b) maintaining and updating the minimum set of gender indicators[1] and aligning it with the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators, relevant for gender analysis; (c) serving as the coordination mechanism for the Global Gender Statistics Programme by, inter alia, convening the annual meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. Furthermore, the report describes the ongoing and planned work by the Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics aimed at strengthening gender data at the national and international levels.

II. Guidelines for producing statistics on asset ownership and entrepreneurship, from a gender perspective

2. In 2017, the Statistics Division, under the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project,[2] continued to develop the guidelines for producing statistics on asset ownership, from a gender perspective. As described in the report of the Secretary-General presented at the forty-eight session of the Statistical Commission,[3] the guidelines are the result of an extensive consultative process with national and international statistical and gender experts,[4] and are based on the results of testing and piloting different methods in seven countries.[5] They provide national statistical agencies and policymakers with guidance on collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating individual-level data on asset ownership for informing four broad sets of policy issues: (a) fostering women's empowerment, (b) fostering women's employment, (c) understanding livelihoods, and (d) reducing poverty and vulnerability. The guidelines introduce the concepts, definitions and data requirements for measuring asset ownership from a gender perspective in household surveys and provide guidance on planning, organizing and implementing a household survey, appending a module, or adding a minimum set of questions on asset ownership

[1] The minimum set of gender indicators was agreed upon by the Commission as a guide for the national production and international compilation of gender statistics (Commission decision 44/109). The latest country level data for the minimum set of gender indicators are available online at http://genderstats.un.org.

[2] The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project is a joint initiative of the Statistics Division and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) aimed at accelerating existing efforts to improve the capacity of countries to produce relevant and high-quality gender statistics.

[3] See E/CN.3/2017/11.

[4] Experts include members of national statistical offices, academia, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank. In addition, the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project has received guidance from the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics.

[5] Georgia, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Philippines, South Africa and Uganda.

to a nationally-representative household survey. A draft version of the guidelines was presented at the forty-eight session of the Statistical Commission and the updated version will be disseminated online through the dedicated Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project portal, once finalized.

3. In November 2017, the Statistics Division in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), organized a seminar in Rome, on the methodology for producing statistics on asset ownership from a gender perspective. The seminar benefited from the participation of nearly 50 experts, including 28 from national statistical offices. It covered the key recommendations outlined in the guidelines, including how to define ownership of assets looking at a bundle of rights (documented ownership, as well as alienation rights); the list of recommended assets for data collection, highlighting priority and additional assets; the issue of valuing assets; the rationale for self-reported or self-declared data collection rather than proxy data, because collecting proxy data from the head of the household, as is standard in many countries, is likely to underestimate both women's and men's ownership of assets; data collection strategies; recommended approaches for sample design, focusing on household selection; and suggested data analysis and indicators, relevant for gender analysis of asset ownership and control. A similar seminar is planned for Asian countries in Manila, in December 2017, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and FAO.

4. The guidelines on producing statistics on entrepreneurship from a gender perspective, another output of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project, present a conceptual framework for consistent, comparable and relevant data collection on women's and men's entrepreneurship, providing a comprehensive description of gender differentials in entrepreneurial outcomes, namely entrepreneurial participation and enterprise performance. The guidelines are expected to help decision makers understand the main individual and contextual drivers of these differentials, including motivations, aspirations, resources and constraints to becoming an entrepreneur.

5. In 2017, the Statistics Division continued to consolidate technical inputs from the statistical community and other stakeholders into the guidelines on asset ownership, before finalizing them. The guidelines on entrepreneurship will benefit from recommendations from the International Labour Organization (ILO) on how to account for the ongoing revision of the international classification on the status of employment, to be presented at the twentieth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in October 2018 and, in particular, on how to account and subtract "dependent contractors" from the population of entrepreneurs. It is expected that the guidelines on entrepreneurship will be finalized by the end of 2017 as a technical report.

6. The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project has been extended until the end of 2018 to promote the guidelines and provide training to national statisticians on how to adapt and operationalize the proposed statistical concepts and methods into their own national contexts. In collaboration with the regional commissions and other stakeholders, three regional meetings for national statistical offices have been planned for 2018 in Africa, Asia and Latin America, respectively. Also in 2018, the project team will continue to provide ad hoc technical assistance to countries that express interest in collecting data on asset ownership from a gender perspective.

III. Minimum set of gender indicators and the global Sustainable Development Goals indicators related to gender

7. The minimum set of gender indicators was identified by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and was agreed upon by the Statistical Commission as a guide for the national production and international compilation of gender statistics, through its decision 44/109 in 2013. In 2014, the first data platform for the minimum set[a] was launched, with features that allowed users to explore data and metadata for all tier I indicators.[b] A new platform was developed in 2016 with increased browsing speed and improved features in terms of data querying and exploring, and data visualization and interpretation. As at the end of 2017, the platform disseminates data for all 45 quantitative and 11 qualitative indicators under tier I and tier II, covering such dimensions as education, employment, health, human rights of women and girls, and public life and decision-making.

8. The selection of the minimum set of gender indicators was guided by the primary criterion that indicators should address key policy concerns as identified in the Beijing Platform for Action and other, more recent international commitments. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics established the Advisory Group on Global Gender Statistics and Indicators Database, with the objective of reviewing the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework to identify potential discrepancies with the minimum set of gender indicators. An initial assessment highlighted around 80 Sustainable Development Goal indicators relevant to gender analysis.

9. In 2017, the Advisory Group on Global Gender Statistics and Indicators Database further reviewed the Sustainable Development Goal indicators from a gender perspective and proposed selected modifications to the minimum set of gender indicators to align the two sets, while still maintaining the consistency of the latter with the Beijing Platform for Action. The Advisory Group took into account only current indicators in the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework and agreed to keep to a minimum the changes proposed to the minimum set, to ensure consistency in time series, particularly for those countries that have been using the thematic set for several years.

10. The assessment presented at the eleventh meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, held in October 2017, resulted in 23 indicators being matched between the minimum set and the gender-relevant Sustainable Development Goal indicators, including 8 indicators identified as identical (same indicator in terms of definitions and concepts), 12 indicators identified as similar (differences in the population or in the disaggregation dimensions covered), and 3 indicators identified as related (covering the same or similar theme and/or area). During the review of the minimum set, the Advisory Group on Global Gender Statistics and Indicators Database also identified three tier III indicators without data

[a] The minimum set of gender indicators is available online at http://genderstats.un.org.

[b] The term "tier I indicators" refers to those that are conceptually clear, include an agreed international definition and are regularly produced by countries. "Tier II indicators" refers to those that are conceptually clear and include an agreed international definition but are not yet regularly produced by countries. "Tier III indicators" refers to those for which international standards need to be developed.

and without plans for methodological development and decided to further investigate the possibility of replacing them.[9]

11. Because of the need to further discuss the potential replacement of the three tier III indicators described above, it was agreed that the Advisory Group would continue its consultation for another year. The final proposal of the Advisory Group will be presented at the meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics in 2018.

IV. Eleventh meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics

12. The eleventh meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics was organized in Rome, on 30 and 31 October 2017, by the Statistics Division and it was hosted by FAO. Around 60 experts on gender statistics participated in the meeting, including 31 experts from 27 national statistical offices,[10] four regional commissions,[11] 12 international organizations[12] and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The meeting was chaired by Statistics Finland and the Statistics Division acted as secretariat of the Group.

13. During the meeting, the methodological developments for measuring specific areas of gender concerns, relevant for monitoring global Sustainable Development Goal indicators, were reviewed and discussed, such as: measuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; measuring intra-household power and decision-making; measuring the nexus between gender and the environment; measuring violence against women; monitoring the presence of legal frameworks for gender equality, and of gender budgeting, at the country level; and measuring asset ownership from a gender perspective. The meeting also took stock of and discussed national practices in measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals from a gender perspective, based on the experiences shared by Japan, India and Italy. Finally, the meeting discussed data disaggregation dimensions and categories for the indicators under Sustainable Development Goal 5 on achieving

[9] The monitored set indicators without data and or plans for methodological development are: (15) Employment rate of persons aged 25-49 with a child under age 3 living in a household and with no children living in the household, by sex (ILO); (16) Proportion of children under age 3 in formal care (OECD); and (19) Proportion of households with access to mass media (radio, television, Internet), by sex of household head (International Telecommunication Union). The Advisory Group proposed the following potential replacements, to be further discussed: (1) Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.6.1 on the proportion of women aged 15 to 49 years of age who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)); (2) an indicator measuring the nexus between women and the environment (to be proposed by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)); and (3) an indicator on homicides by an intimate partner (part of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.1.1), as a proxy for femicides (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)).

[10] Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Finland, Georgia, Ghana, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, South Africa, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

[11] Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

[12] ADB, EAG, ILO, OECD, UNEP, Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNFPA, UN Women, United Nations on Drugs and Crime, UN-Women, the World Health Organization and the World Bank.

gender equality and empowering all women and girls,[12] to contribute to the ongoing related work stream of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators; and agreed on selected amendments to the minimum set of gender indicators (see section III above for further details).

14. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics agreed on its 2018 annual programme of work, which includes the following:

(a) The Statistics Division, as secretariat, is to link the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics portal to regional gender statistics e-learning and toolkits portals maintained by the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia;

(b) The Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank are to report back to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics on their next steps to further develop methods to measure intra-household power and decision-making; the nexus between gender and environment; and poverty at the individual level;

(c) The World Health Organization is to report back to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics on the work of the Inter-Agency Group on Measuring Violence against Women, including on the efforts to harmonize statistics on the prevalence of selected forms of violence for international estimates and global monitoring;

(d) The Statistics Division is to reflect the agreed changes in the minimum set of gender indicators to align it with the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators framework;

(e) The Advisory Group on Global Gender Statistics and Indicators Database is to continue the discussion on the three indicators proposed for replacement in the minimum set of gender indicators and report back to the group;

(f) The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics is to continue to work on data disaggregation dimensions and categories for gender relevant Sustainable Development Goal indicators, for the consideration of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators;

(g) The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics is to provide inputs and contribute to the organization of the 2018 Global Forum on Gender Statistics in Japan;

(h) The twelfth annual meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics is to be convened in 2018.

V. The way forward

15. In 2018, under the Global Gender Statistics Programme, the work of the Statistics Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics will include the activities agreed upon by the Group at its eleventh meeting, including activities related to Sustainable Development Goal indicators and data disaggregation; the activities under the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality

[12] The group reviewed and agreed with the dimensions and categories for the following Sustainable Development Goal indicators: 5.2.1, 5.2.2 (age groups and place of occurrence), 5.4.1 (age groups and location), and 5.a.1 (type of agriculture land tenure).

project, and the activities carried out under the gender statistics and indicators component of the Programme on Statistics and Data under the tenth tranche of the United Nations Development Account.[11] That component of the Programme will focus on strengthening statistical capacity of countries in terms of making better use of existing data and in communicating gender indicators, in producing gender statistics in selected areas including on time use and violence against women, and in understanding the gender dimension in emerging areas such as environment and climate change.

16. In 2018, the Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Government of Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Cabinet Office) and relevant international agencies and development partners, will organize and convene the twelfth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the seventh Global Forum on Gender Statistics in Japan.

17. Last, the Statistics Division, in collaboration with experts from national, regional and international agencies and academia, will initiate research to update the United Nations guidelines for the production of statistics on time use, in line with the International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics and other agreed methodologies. The guidelines will provide options for collecting time-use data using innovative approaches.

VI. Summary and conclusions

18. The Statistical Commission is invited to take note of the work carried out in 2017 and planned for 2018 by the Statistics Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics.

[11] The tenth tranche of the Development Account covers the period 2016–2019. The Programme on Statistics and Data is a comprehensive project centred on the strengthening of national statistical systems to measure, monitor and report on the Sustainable Development Goals. It is jointly implemented by 10 entities: the Statistics Division, UNEP, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNODC, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.